



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAXES PERFORMANCE AUDIT SERVICES RFQ #CB-1815

Issue Date:

December 1, 2017

Closing Time and Date:

4:00 p.m. on Friday, January 12, 2018

INTENT

The City of Abilene is seeking Request for Qualifications from qualified firms to provide Hotel Occupancy Tax Performance Audit Services.

BACKGROUND

The City of Abilene has long contracted with the Abilene Chamber of Commerce for the provision of marketing, tourism and the promotion of the arts. During the fiscal year 2018 budget process the City Council directed the City Manager to identify a qualified firm to undertake a performance audit on the City's professional services agreement with the Abilene Chamber of Commerce for the expenditure of Hotel Occupancy Taxes by the Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Abilene Cultural Affairs Council.

The City Council is attempting to understand how effective these two agencies are in:

- 1.) promoting and encouraging hotel night stays through tourism, and
- 2.) in regards to the Cultural Affairs Council, in the promotion of the arts and its ability to generate hotel night stays.

The performance audit must be completed by July 31, 2018.

SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of work is intended to address the following questions over a seven-year period from fiscal year 2011 through and including fiscal year 2017:

- 1.) Does the Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACVB) efficiently and effectively spend hotel occupancy taxes to achieve its mission, goals, and objectives as set forth by the ACVB Board of Directors?
- 2.) Does the Abilene Cultural Affairs Council (ACAC) efficiently and effectively spend hotel occupancy taxes to achieve its mission, goals, and objectives as set forth by the ACAC Board of Directors?
- 3.) Does the Abilene Chamber of Commerce (ACOC), as the parent entity of the ACVB and ACAC efficiently and effectively spend hotel occupancy taxes to achieve its mission, goals, and objectives as set forth by the ACOC Board of Directors?
- 4.) Are the expenditures made by the three entities (ACVB, ACAC, ACOC) in keeping with current best practices, and effective in promoting, encouraging and increasing hotel night stays?
- 5.) Are there adequate controls to prevent fraud, waste and abuse of hotel occupancy tax revenues remitted to the ACVB, ACAC and ACOC by the City of Abilene, Texas?
- 6.) The City of Abilene (COA) also receives Hotel Occupancy Taxes. Are the expenditures made by the COA in keeping with current best practices, and effective in promoting, encouraging and increasing hotel night stays?

In addition to the Performance Audit, the selected firm will be required to:

- 1.) Conduct review of audit findings with City administration.
- 2.) Make presentation to the City Council of final report.

SELECTION CRITERIA & AWARD PROCESS

The City will consider the following qualifications in order to select the most qualified submittal:

- 1.) The overall qualifications of the firm; (25%)
- 2.) The firm's experience with local governments and governmental accounting standards; (25%)
- 3.) The firm's proven and demonstrated experience in conducting performance audits of hotel occupancy tax expenditures, convention and visitors bureaus and cultural affairs councils, and the auditing team's experience with the same; and, (25%)
- 4.) The firm's audit methodology and approach to the scope of work. (25%)

Upon close of qualification submittals, the City selection team will review and select the most qualified firm using the selection criteria above. The most highly qualified firms may be selected for interviews.

The City will then negotiate a fair and reasonable price with the most qualified firm. If unable to reach an agreement, the City will formally suspend negotiations with that firm and begin negotiations with the next most qualified firm. This process will continue until a firm is awarded the contract.

Upon successful negotiation, the firm will be expected to enter into the City of Abilene's Professional Services Contract. A sample copy of this is attached.

The City reserves the right to cancel this RFQ at any time, to elect not to award, to reject any or all qualifications, to waive any informality or irregularity in any qualification received.

QUALIFICATION MEETING

A pre-qualification meeting will be December 13, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. in the Admin Conference Room, City Hall.

QUESTIONS

Questions relating to definitions or interpretations of this RFQ must be submitted in writing to Mindy Patterson, Assistant City Manager, no later than 5:00 p.m. on December 15, 2017.

Any responses to questions or clarifications will be posted by Addenda no later than December 20, 2017.

SUBMISSION

One (1) original and nine (9) copies of the response, one (1) electronic version in PDF format for City internal distribution purposes.